Building *High Literacy* Skills for Comprehending Expository Text

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Text Comprehension

Comprehension is the reason for reading.

If readers can read the words, but do not understand what they are reading, then they are not really reading!

High Literacy Skills

Goals of instruction:

- Teach all students to think, read & write
 - To apply the meaning gained from text responsibly

 Heller & Greenleaf (2007)
- ☐ Teach students procedures that permit them greater success with less effort

Jetton & Dole (2004)

High Literacy Skills

Range of strategies

Select most effective strategy for

- Student's particular learning needs and abilities
- Demands of specific text

NOT ALL STRATEGIES CAN BE USED EFFECTIVELY BY ALL STUDENTS

High Literacy Skills

Effectively taught strategy instruction

- Student-sensitive
- Motivates students to
 - Experiment with strategies
 - Construct own personalized versions of efficient information processing



Reflective decision-making about

- whether
- **how**

to use known cognitive strategies when reading challenging text

Use the most strategic intervention possible to address the specific demands of a particular learning task



Workplaces in 21st Century

Require well developed literacy skills

- Critical reading and thinking
- Problem-solving
- Communication



- Identify problems
- Ask appropriate questions
- Locate resources and information
- Formulate and test solutions to problems
- Communicate effectively what they find



TEACHERS

- Must be chief learners in the classrooms
- Spend significant amount of time
 - MODELING their own learning, and
 - SHOWING students HOW TO

USE STRATEGIES TO COMPREHEND

For **STUDENTS** to achieve HIGH LITERACY SKILLS

PRINCIPALS

Need to be the chief learners in schools

SUPERINTENDENTS

Need to be the chief learners in the districts



People without information cannot act responsibly.

People with information are compelled to act responsibly.

REAL Reading

Less than 25% of reading by adults and students is done in narrative texts

Snowball, 1995

NAEP (and other large scale assessments)
require students to read and respond to
narratives ...poetry... informational texts,
and functional text
(reading to perform a task)



Comprehension of Expository Text

- Often determines whether students will be successful throughout their schooling
- Does not develop automatically
- Deserves intentional instructional focus

Expository Text

- Informational books
- Content-area textbooks
- Biographies and/or autobiographies
- Newspapers and/or periodicals
- Internet sources
- Brochures and/or manuals
- Functional (directions)

Annotated Bibliography

Expository text provides information

- Catalogued by Library of Congress as Juvenile Literature
- "Soft-expository text" provides information embedded in
 - Fiction
 - Historical fiction
 - Poetry
 - Phrase noted by Ann Fiala

Internal Text Structure Patterns

- Descriptives, using categories of information without specific ordering
- Comparison/contrast
- Sequence of events
- Problem and solution
- Process description
- Cause and effect





Descriptive	Describes a place, thing, topic, or idea telling how it is
Sequential	Events, facts, concepts in order first, second, third, then, next, last, before, after, finally
Compare/ Contrast	Identification of similarities/differences same as, alike, similar to, resembles, compared to, different from, unlike, but, yet



Cause/ Effect Description of causes and resulting effects

if, so, so that, because of, as a result of, since, in order to, cause, effect

Problem /
Solution

Shows development of problem/solution because, problem, solution, cause, since, as a result, so that

EXTERNAL Text Structure

- Appearance
 - Organization of print
 - Subheadings
 - Margins/Sidebars
 - Font
 - Style
 - Size

EXTERNAL Text Structure

- "Extras"
 - Captions
 - Diagrams
 - Author's Notes
 - Glossary



Comprehension Strategy INSTRUCTION

Is EFFECTIVE when...

- it is explicit
- teachers tell readers why and when
 - use strategies
 - which strategies to use, and
 - how to apply those strategies

READING EXPOSITORY TEXT

Interwoven Components of Beginning Reading Instruction

Phonemic Awareness

Phonics

Fluency

Identify words accurately and fluently

Vocabulary

Text Comprehension

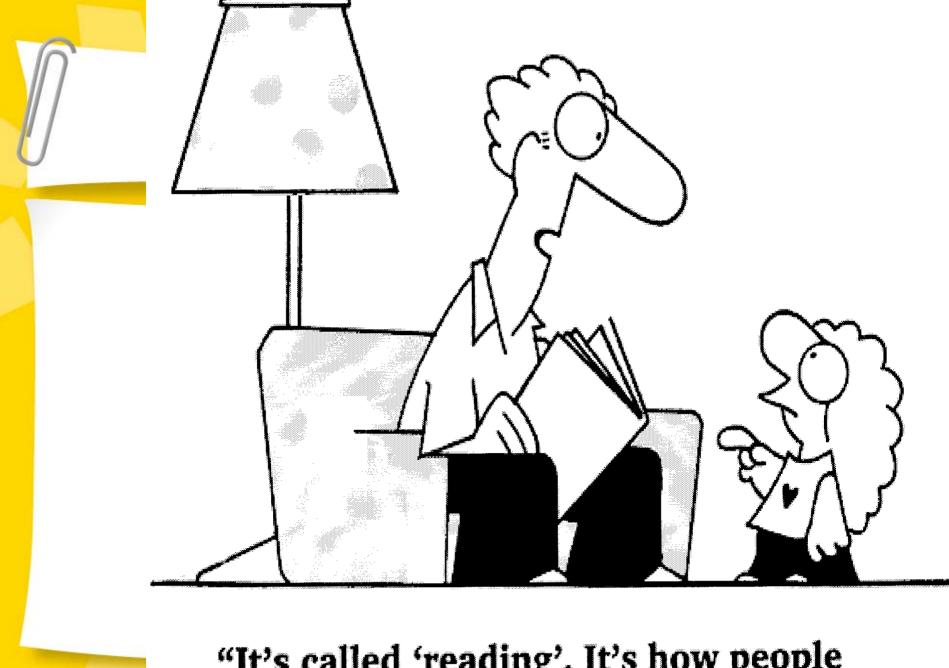
Construct meaning

Explicit instruction includes

- Direct explanation
- Modeling
- Guided Practice
- Application

Step by Step

- I do. You watch.
 - Modeling, explaining why, how, when
- I do. You help.
 - Guiding practice in small groups/pairs; providing specific feedback as needed
- You do. I watch.
 - Practicing independently
- You do. I help.
 - Scaffolding



"It's called 'reading'. It's how people install new software into their brains."

Seven Strategies

- Activating
- Inferring
- Questioning
- Monitoring-Clarifying
- Searching-Selecting
- Visualizing-Organizing
- Summarizing



- Goal of comprehension
 - Constructing MEANING
- Literal understanding isn't enough. The reader must interact with the text.
- Isabel Beck defines understanding as being able to explain information, connect it to previous knowledge, and use information

Constructing Meaning

- Goal of comprehension
 - Constructing MEANING
- Literal understanding isn't enough.

Reader must interact with the text.

Making Connections

Text-to-self

Text-to-text

Text-to-world

Activating

KNOWLEDGE

Inferring

Activating Knowledge

Before reading, preview the text with students and activate prior experiences to

construct meaning from text

- What they already know about
 - Topic, content or time period
 - Author and/or illustrator

Text structure

Put Reading First: The Research Building Blocks for Teaching Children to Read. (2001). National Institute for Family Literacy

Making Inferences

- Inferringreading between the lines
- Inferential thinking occurs when text clues merge with the reader's prior knowledge and questions to points the reader towards a conclusion

Inferring allows readers to make their own discoveries without the direct comment of the author.



vigorously

mortified

domestic

destinies

novel

virtually

obsidian

obnoxious

electrodes

cranial

consternation

dilapidated

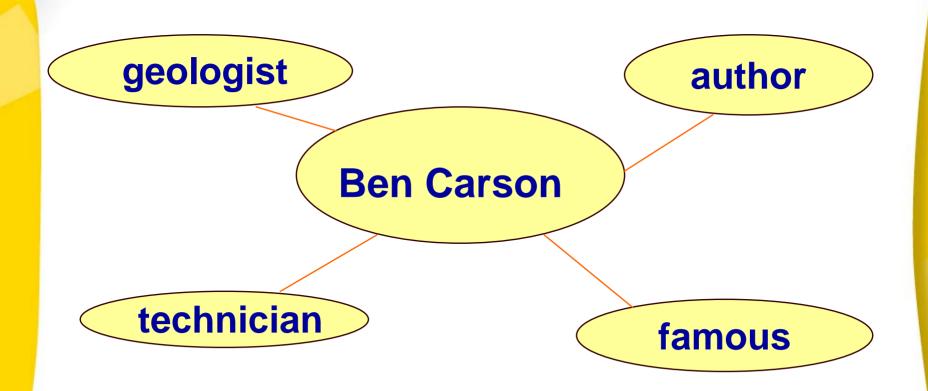
geological

coalesce



Splendid Careers. (2003)

ISBN: 1-582345-787-5





- Key to understanding
- Clarify confusion
- Stimulate research efforts
- Propel us forward and increase our comprehension





- Use continuum of questioning to generate interaction with text
 - Requires students to integrate information and *think* as they read

Students generating questions for othersRequires students to know the answers

Questioning the Author

Thinking more about who has written the text and the message or meaning of the content of the text

- What was the author trying to say?
- What could the author have said instead?
- What was the intent of the author?
- What is the point of view?
- How could it be stated more clearly?



- What or who the subject is
- What the action is
- Why something happened
- Where something is or happened
- When something happened
- How something looks or is done



- How to be aware of his/her understanding while reading
- How to use appropriate procedures when they have problems with comprehension



Encourage students to mark and code text
with thoughts and questions, "to leave
tracks" so they can be reminded later what
they were thinking as they read that text

Searching for Information

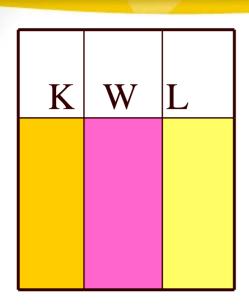
- Using a variety of sources within the text to select appropriate information
- Refining clarity of understanding and clarifying misunderstandings
- Solving problems stated in text

Connections & Relationships

Use visual aids based on text structures

- Think Sheets
- Story Maps
- Graphic Organizers
- Concept Maps
- Word Banks

Strategic Tools



Semantic Feature Analysis

	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·		
Size:	immense	tiny	ordinary
bicycle			Х
insect		X	
mountain	X		
	Venn	Diagram	

Get the Gist

Synthesizing

Puts together separate parts to make a new whole

- Allows readers
 - to make sense of important info, increasing comprehension
 - to change their thinking

Summarizing

Restating the author's meaning accurately in student's own words

Creating a product that reflects comprehension

Comprehension Strategies

Are not ends in themselves

- Are means of helping students understand what they are reading
- Are used in context, especially with content area reading

The man who does not read good books has no advantage over the man who cannot read them.

Mark Twain



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